

# Working with legislators

What can I do and how do I do it?



Never doubt that a small  
group of thoughtful  
committed citizens can  
change the world.  
Indeed, it's the only thing  
that ever has.

*Margaret Mead*

# One Voice

Individuals and organizations are more effective if they speak with one unified voice. One message – the same message.

# Why does it matter?

Federal and state rules and regulations profoundly affect the services we can provide for our clients.

- ◆ Federal and state funding
- ◆ Older Americans Act
- ◆ Farm Bill



# Who's Who – Federal


Three branches of government:


- ◆ Legislative (Congress) – **makes** the laws
  - Senate: 2 from each state, 6-year terms
  - House: currently set to 435 (population-driven), 2-year terms
- ◆ Executive – **enforces** the laws of the US
  - President, VP, White House
- ◆ Judicial – **interprets** the laws
  - Supreme Court, et al.

# www.house.gov

Visitors | Educators and Students | Media | Doing Business with the House | Employment

Search:

 **UNITED STATES HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES**

**Here**  

FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVE  
Enter your zip code

112th Congress, 2nd Session · The House is not in session

REPRESENTATIVES | LEADERSHIP | COMMITTEES | LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY | THE HOUSE EXPLAINED

**Congress Honors Suu Kyi**  
Congressional Gold Medal presented to human rights champion Aung Sun Suu Kyi.

Find Your Representative | Watch HouseLive | Congress Honors Suu Kyi | 2012 Capitol Christmas Tree

**Legislative Activity**

Schedule | Floor Proceedings | Votes | Bills & Reports

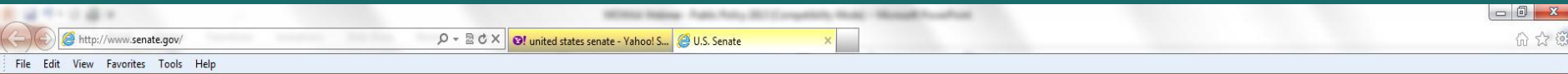
Upcoming Events  
[Watch Most Recent House Floor Activity](#)

There are no events scheduled.  
Please visit the [Legislative Activity page](#) to view previous events.

**To locate your programs' U.S Representatives(s), type the zip code(s) for your program's service area.**

<http://www.house.gov/content/features/20120919/>

# www.senate.gov



A screenshot of the www.senate.gov homepage. The header features the United States Senate logo and a navigation menu with links for SENATORS, COMMITTEES, LEGISLATION &amp; RECORDS, ART &amp; HISTORY, VISITORS, and REFERENCE. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled "When a New Congress Begins" and includes a paragraph about the 113th Congress session starting on January 3, 2013. A sidebar on the left contains links to "CAPITOL CAMERA", "VIRTUAL REFERENCE DESK", "PUBLIC DISCLOSURE", "NOMINATIONS", and "STATISTICS &amp; LISTS". A sidebar on the right lists "FLOOR WEBCAST", "2013 SESSION SCHEDULE", "SCHEDULED HEARINGS", "ACTIVE LEGISLATION", and "VOTES".



Here

To locate your programs' U.S Senators, click your state in the dropdown menu.

# Who's who - State

## ◆ Governor

- Chief Executive of the state
- Unlimited 4-year terms – elected by the masses in general election
- Considerable control over state budget
- Power of appointment of many officials
- Commander-in-Chief of state National Guard when not under federal control

# Who's who - State

## ◆ WI State Senate

- 33 in state of WI. 18 **Republicans**, 15 **Democrats**. 17 senate committees. May serve unlimited 4-year terms.

## ◆ WI State Assembly

- 99 members in Wisconsin. **R**-59, **D**-39, 1 vacant seat. 31 Assembly committees. May serve unlimited 2-year terms.



# Who's who - State

◆ <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Wisconsin State Legislature website. The browser address bar displays "http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/default.aspx". The page features a navigation menu with links for Home, Senate, Assembly, Legislation, Joint Legislative Committees, Legislative Service Agencies, Wisconsin Law, Wisconsin Blue Book, 2010 Redistricting Information, and Other Information. A search bar is located at the top left. The main content area includes a large image of the Wisconsin State Capitol building, with a caption "Photos by Brent Nicastro and Jay Salvo". To the right of the image are sections for "Legislative Activity" (including 2011-2012 Session Calendar, Committee Schedule, Senate Session, Assembly Session, Spotlight, Session Statistics - updated 7/13/12, and Audio/Video Coverage) and "Budget Bill" (Budget Bill (partially vetoed)). Below the image are sections for "DOCUMENTS" (Searchable database of bills and amendments, statutes and other legislative documents), "WHO REPRESENTS ME?" (Find your state and federal representatives), "Legislative Districts", and "NOTIFICATION SERVICE" (Track legislative activities on proposals, committees, authors and subjects by receiving notification emails).

State of Wisconsin Home Page

Site Search

Home

Senate

Assembly

Legislation

Joint Legislative Committees

Legislative Service Agencies

Wisconsin Law

Wisconsin Blue Book

2010 Redistricting Information

Other Information

Request text and history of legislative proposals

Assembly Senate

Proposal Type

Bill

Proposal Number

Session

2011 Regular Session

Submit

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

Photos by Brent Nicastro and Jay Salvo

Legislative Activity

2011-2012 Session Calendar

Committee Schedule

Senate Session

Assembly Session

Spotlight

Session Statistics - updated 7/13/12

Audio/Video Coverage

Budget Bill

Budget Bill (partially vetoed)

DOCUMENTS

Searchable database of bills and amendments, statutes and other legislative documents.

WHO REPRESENTS ME?

Find your state and federal representatives.

Legislative Districts

NOTIFICATION SERVICE

Track legislative activities on proposals, committees, authors and subjects by receiving notification emails.

# Examples:

## Federal and State Legislation

- ◆ Older Americans Act
  - Each state gets \$XX based on population. States determine how to distribute within their state
- ◆ Farm Bill Senior Farmers' Market Voucher Program
  - States get \$XX. State decides how to distribute funds. Not all states get it, and all are not distributed state-wide.

# Example:

## State-specific Legislation

- ◆ Senior Nutrition Program
  - Older Americans Act Nutrition Program
  - State of Wisconsin provides about \$13M for OAA aging programs from the state's General Purpose Revenue fund
  - Census shifts have left some counties with fewer low-income seniors leading to a decrease in funding
  - Need to advocate for additional funding for those counties



# Statute vs. Regulation

- ◆ Legislature enacts statutes.
- ◆ Statute = **law**
- ◆ Regulation outlines how the law will be enacted.
  - Federal law → state statute → legislative language in State Administrative Code
- ◆ Regulation = **rules** that outline how the law will be enacted and enforced (the details)

# Statute vs. Regulation

## ◆ Statutory Code

- **State law** passed by the state legislature and signed by the governor

## ◆ Administrative Code

- **State regulations** written by the appropriate department
- Same authority and enforcement as statute



*I have a voice*

Politics should be the part  
time job of every citizen

*Dwight D Eisenhower*

A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in a darker shade of teal, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# Advocacy vs. Lobbying

## ◆ Examples of **Advocacy**:

- Telling your <legislator> how a federal grant your organization received has helped your constituents.
- Educating a <legislator> about the effects of a policy on your constituency.
- Inviting a <legislator> to visit your organization so that he/she may see firsthand how federal funding or a policy affects day-to-day operations and the difference it makes

<http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit/>

# Advocacy vs. Lobbying

## ◆ Examples of **Lobbying**:

- Asking your <legislator> to vote for or against, or amend, introduced legislation.
- Preparing materials or organizing events in support of lobbying activities.

<http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit/>

# Wisconsin Government Accountability Board

- ◆ You have an obligation to obtain a lobbying license from the Government Accountability Board, and the organization that pays you is required to authorize you as its lobbyist, if you attempt to influence state legislation or an administrative rule on behalf of a business or organization that employs you or from which you receive a payment (other than reimbursement of expenses) **and you communicate with a state official or legislative employee about such matters on 5 or more days within a six month reporting period.**

# Lobbyist

An individual who for compensation:

- ◆ Communicates with state officials
- ◆ For the purpose of lobbying
- ◆ On 5 or more days in a six-month period
- ◆ **Excludes communicating with own legislators**

<http://gab.wi.gov/lobbying>



# Do I need to register?

- ◆ If you represent the views of a business or organization that pays you, but convey those views only to legislators elected from the Senate and Assembly districts **in which you reside**, you need not be licensed or authorized.
- ◆ If you represent the views of a business or organization that pays you and you convey those views to all or many legislators or officials but do so only occasionally, **up to 4 days within a 6-month period**, you need not be licensed or authorized.

# Individual Lobbying

It is your democratic right, protected by the First Amendment, to voice your personal opinions on legislation and lobby your government officials. Your voice is important.

# Non-profits and Lobbying

- ◆ Non-profits are allowed to engage in lobbying activities, provided they do not engage in excessive lobbying or spend a certain percentage of their budget on lobbying efforts.
- ◆ Wisconsin law requires your organization to register with the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board if your organization employs an individual:

# Non-profits and Lobbying

- ◆ for compensation
- ◆ to communicate with state officials
- ◆ to attempt to influence state legislation or administrative rule-making on its behalf, and
- ◆ that individual communicates with state officials on 5 or more days during either the first or last six months of the year.

**SO**

**WHAT?!?**



# What do we need to do?

- ◆ Legislators need to know who we are!
  - What / who are we?
  - What do we do to keep their constituents healthy?
  - How do we relate to them and their committee or agency?
  - How can we be resources for them?

# What do we need to do?

Law makers need to know what we can do for them to make their jobs easier.

**How can we help them help their constituents?**



# What can I do?

- ◆ Legislators **need and expect** their constituents to contact them about issues they are passionate about.
- ◆ Be concise, but cover all the points you wish to make. Most meetings last less than 30 minutes, so budget your time wisely and leave time for discussion.

It is not enough to be  
compassionate.  
You must act.

*Tenzin Gyatso*

A stylized, dark teal silhouette of a mountain range is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, extending from the right edge towards the center.

# What can I do?

- ◆ Establish a relationship with their staffer
- ◆ Visit face-to-face
- ◆ Call
- ◆ Write
- ◆ Email
- ◆ Invite them to do a site visit at your organization/program (officials currently in office)
- ◆ Use social media
- ◆ Local press

# What can I do?

- ◆ Explain why the issue is important to you and to people in your district/state.
- ◆ Explain the consequences that adverse action or failure to act will have on individuals in your state, city, or town.

# What can I do?

- ◆ After you make your points, request specific action, and don't be afraid to ask the legislator's position.
- ◆ Follow the visit with a letter or email thanking the member or staffer for their time and briefly summarizing the major issues discussed.

# Tips for More Effective Advocacy Efforts

- ◆ Don't be intimidated.
- ◆ Be professional and courteous.
- ◆ Keep it simple.
- ◆ Make it personal – tell stories about people in their districts.
- ◆ Ask for the sale.

# Making Your Case

- ◆ **Know the facts:** Use current data to discuss your issue.
- ◆ ***Tell stories:*** Stories are powerful and persuasive!
- ◆ Use positive language: ***Give people something to be FOR,*** not against.
- ◆ Be mindful of timing: Pay attention to current news events, lawmakers' schedules, etc.

# Look and Play the Part

- ◆ Dress for success
  - Business professional
- ◆ Speak confidently using professional language
  - Speak about your issue in language they can understand.
  - Limit use of acronyms and other terms that are specific only to your program.
  - Limit slang terms.



# Look and play the part

- ◆ Smile during introductions.
- ◆ Nice firm handshake with a smile.
- ◆ Look them in the eye when you're speaking with them.
- ◆ Sit or stand attentively.
- ◆ Do not interrupt or get aggressive.
- ◆ Act polite and professional at all times.

# What NOT to do!

- ◆ Don't threaten your legislator.
- ◆ Don't be anonymous.
- ◆ Don't pretend to speak for everyone.
- ◆ Don't be a pest.
- ◆ Don't insist on immediate action.
- ◆ Don't speak without doing your homework.

# The "Pre-Meeting" Meeting

- ◆ Meet 10 to 15 minutes before each appointment.
- ◆ Review your talking points. What is your message?
- ◆ Review your legislative ask.
- ◆ Choose your words carefully, and don't share too much too early.

# The "Pre-Meeting" meeting

- ◆ Review what each person will contribute to the meeting.
- ◆ Select roles/topics that each person will address.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to take notes while in the meeting.

# Introductions (2-3 Minutes)

## The Hook: Who You Are

- ◆ Everyone should briefly introduce themselves.
- ◆ Talk about where you work, go to school, live, etc...This will help your local official get to know you.
- ◆ **BRING BUSINESS CARDS!!**

# Personal Stories (3-5 Minutes)

## The Line: Why You Care

- ◆ Share why you are involved in this initiative – BE BRIEF, CLEAR and CONCISE.
- ◆ Share why it is important to you.
- ◆ Share a poignant and personal story that is relevant to this issue.
- ◆ ***This is the most powerful tool that you have at your disposal!***

*A home-delivered meal driver arrived to deliver a meal and heard a faint call for help.*

*He walked around the house and found a bedroom window cracked slightly. He took off the screen, pried the window open, crawled in, and found the 89-year-old gentleman on the floor. He had fallen the night before. His sigh of relief to have help was great. The driver made him comfortable, called the ambulance and waited until they arrived....*



# The Ask (5-7 Minutes)

## The Sinker: What You Want That Person to Do

- ◆ Present the issue, and stay on message.
- ◆ Make your legislative "ask" very clear.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to ask for a commitment.
- ◆ Be sure to listen to all responses.
- ◆ ***Remember "The Ask" is the ultimate goal of your meeting!***

# Wrap-up (1-2 Minutes)

## Thank You and Pleasantries

- ◆ Point out the information in the leave behind packets or handouts.
- ◆ Thank the official for their time
- ◆ Be sure to send a follow-up thank you via thank-you card or email
- ◆ Be sure to provide any further information that may be needed with your thank-you

# Post Meeting Wrap-up

- ◆ Take a few moments after your meeting and review what really happened.
- ◆ Will he or she support your efforts?
- ◆ What follow up is needed? Who will be responsible for follow up?
- ◆ Was anything revealed about how his/her colleagues may feel about this issue?
- ◆ Record your relevant information, and share it as needed.